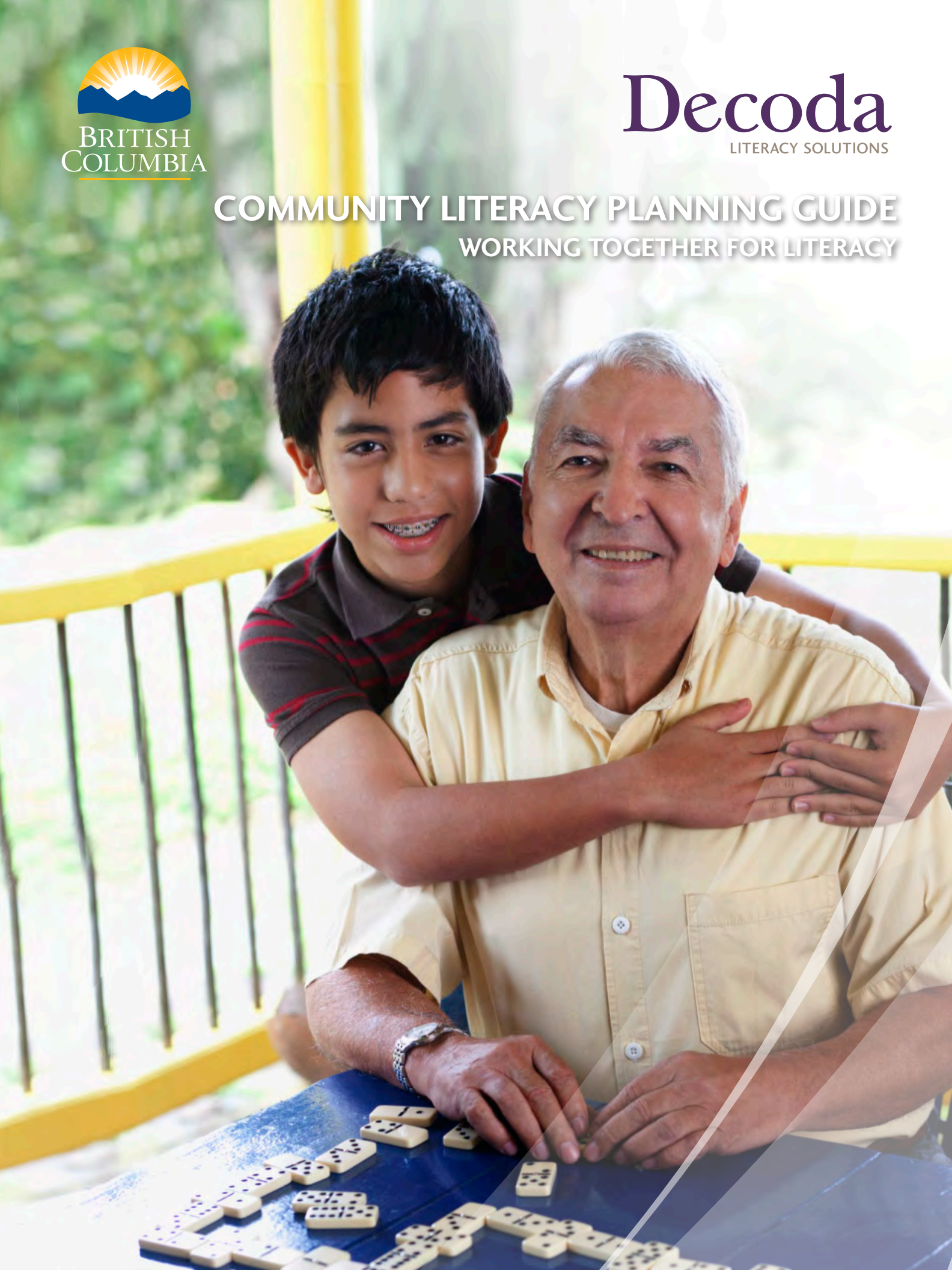
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Decoda
LITERACY SOLUTIONS

COMMUNITY LITERACY PLANNING GUIDE

WORKING TOGETHER FOR LITERACY



COMMUNITY LITERACY PLANNING GUIDE
WORKING TOGETHER FOR LITERACY

A companion document to the Community Literacy Planning Guide of Decoda Literacy Solutions, revised 2008, and The District Literacy Planning Guide of the Ministry of Education

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The first edition of Community Literacy Planning Guide: Working Together for Literacy was developed in 2004 by 2010 Legacies Now with support from the Province of British Columbia. Decoda Literacy Solutions was formed from the merger of the literacy department of 2010 Legacies Now and Literacy BC in spring 2011. Decoda Literacy Solutions continues to support and facilitate the community literacy planning process. For more information, visit decoda.ca.

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“All of us can reach entirely new levels of possibility together, possibilities that are not possible from soapbox rhetoric. To achieve this we need to begin these conversations about purpose and shared significance and commit to staying in them. As we stay in the conversation we will start to work together rather than trying to convince each other of who has more of the truth. We are capable of creating wonderful and vibrant communities when we discover what dreams of possibility we share.”

–Wheatly & Kellner - Rogers, (1998). The paradox and promise of community. In the community of the future. New York: The Peter Drucker Foundation, page 18

new moon
#1 New York Times Bestseller
new adventure
breathless
THE TWILIGHT SAGA:
STEPHENIE MEYER
THE #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER BY
STEPHENIE MEYER
ANTHONY HOROWITZ
Snakehead

Part One
Introduction

Introduction

For many years in British Columbia there has been a focus on literacy in communities. This approach is based on an understanding that literacy is everyone's responsibility and too big a job for education systems, libraries, adult literacy organizations or others working alone. We make the greatest gains by working together and pooling our resources and experience.

In 2004, 2010 Legacies Now launched the Literacy Now Communities program which supports the development of community literacy task groups to discuss, plan and take action for literacy development across the lifespan. These task groups are made up of representatives from a variety of community organizations, including libraries, family resource programs, employment agencies, the K-12 system, and literacy organizations. Task groups are assisted by literacy outreach coordinators who facilitate literacy discussions in the community and support the development of actions.

Currently (spring, 2012) there are 102 task groups representing more than 400 communities in B.C.

In 2007, boards of education began their participation in the process and were asked to submit a yearly district literacy plan (DLP) to the Ministry of Education on behalf of task groups. The DLP provides an update of the community literacy plans (CLP) from across the geographic area of the school district. The process of collaborative thinking and work at the community level, which is supported by the Literacy Now Communities program, provides the material for the community literacy plans and the yearly review of this community work across the school district is what makes up the district literacy plan.

Research conducted by the University of British Columbia in 2010 about the community planning and implementation process finds that the broad range of organizations and community representatives participating at the community level are conduits of valuable information to ensure that plans and programs are more responsive to community needs, facilitate access to services and opportunities, and avoid duplication of services and efforts.

> "The Community Literacy Program is an important model for creating partnerships and broadening community engagement around literacy and learning opportunities in communities. The process and activities realize the concept of strengthening partnerships and relationships in communities, where organizational elements, including school districts, are increasingly linked, connected, related, or interdependent." (Glickman et al. 2011)

"Civil society has always been a crucial partner in designing flexible programs for specific groups at the community level and in lobbying for the interests of vulnerable populations. After all, it is in communities themselves that literacy is practiced and sustained. Therefore, community engagement is essential to creating an environment in which literacy programs can be successfull."

— Council of the Ministers of Education, Canada (2009) Literacy: More Than Words; Progress Report on Literacy

We have collectively learned a lot about issues in communities, what community members need for literacy support, and how processes for creating actions take place.

We've learned that:

- Working together with a wider range of community service providers and institutions in a deep, meaningful way is complex work! It can feel chaotic, messy and ambiguous. However, over time, this work gets clearer and easier.
- Our collective understanding is increased. There is more possibility for change and for exciting and dynamic growth – we begin to see the results of our hard work.
- The benefit of mobilizing community resources to meet the individual needs of community members is worth the effort.
- It is important to measure our gains against expected outcomes and tell the story of the important successes, and challenges, taking place in communities across the province.

This guidebook provides information about what we have learned – including why this work is so important, how it's being done, and how we can continue to improve literacy in our communities through sustained commitment and evaluation. The first order of business is to explore how the community literacy plan, a reporting requirement for ongoing literacy funding, should be completed. But more importantly, this guide provides task groups and literacy outreach coordinators with a tool to maintain the community literacy process. It discusses roles and responsibilities, how the work gets done, how resources are allocated, and how collaboration offers our best chance at sustaining our work and demonstrating to others its value to others.

You will find guiding questions for completing community literacy plans on page 21.

VIKING

Part Two

Why does literacy matter in B.C.?

Why does literacy matter in B.C.?

With the emergence of the "new knowledge economy", globalization, and advances in technology and communications, literacy has larger implications than ever before. It means something very different to be literate in the digital age of early 21st century North America than it did in the resource-based economy of British Columbia of the 20th century.

In Canada, a declining birth rate and aging population puts increased pressure on us to ensure that as many Canadians as possible have the best chance to participate. Yet literacy requirements continue to vary among social and economic groups, with low levels concentrated among the poor, the undereducated, seniors, Aboriginal people and members of minority populations.

It is time for change, and according to the 2010 B.C. Speech from the Throne, several significant reforms will be advanced to modernize our education system for the 21st century, creating new opportunities for early learning, smarter use of education resources and new choices for students.

We also know that the vast majority of our time is spent outside the formal education system. Informal and nonformal learning happens in the context of home and community and it is essential for the importance of this type of learning to be recognized. Supporting literacy learning across the lifespan is simply too large a job for any one sector to tackle on its own.

"There are good practices happening all over B.C. and we want to make sure those practices continue and expand. We're good, but we can be better."

— Alison Sidow, Superintendent of Achievement, Ministry of Education

"The revolution doesn't happen when society adopts new tools, it happens when society adopts new behaviours."

— Clay Shirkey, Distinguished Writer in Residence, New York University

Русский Мир
Обсуждаем медицинскую реформу!
BEETHOVEN
FESTIVAL

Part Three

The Community Literacy Plan

The community literacy plan

WHAT IS IT?

The community literacy plan is frequently described as a living document - the yearly work plan and documentation of the goals and actions resulting from community-wide planning and implementing processes.

The community literacy plan is one of the tools to support the process of literacy development throughout the community. It provides the blueprint and information about how community partners are working together to improve literacy. These plans and the process they support are part of the provincial strategy to improve literacy skills and encourage lifelong learning for all British Columbians.

Using the 2010 Legacies Now (Decoda) Community Literacy Planning Guide (2004-08), all of the 102 task groups in the province began the work of supporting community-wide literacy development by making a plan. They looked at the assets and issues of the community and then set goals and actions based on the current realities of the community. This community literacy planning process continues to be the foundation for community literacy plans.

Information about ongoing and updated goals, actions taken against those goals, the results of community literacy work and plans for the next year have been provided in community literacy plans since the Literacy Now Community Literacy program began in 2004. These plans reflect the thinking

of community members at a given time and recognize that planning is an ongoing process intertwined with taking action and evaluating the process and outcomes.

THE GUIDELINES

Literacy planning is a community-wide process that includes many partners. The most important aspect of building a community literacy plan is the development of effective relationships within the community.

The process of developing a community literacy plan enables the members of the community literacy task group to gain a stronger understanding of the various perspectives on literacy throughout the community. It opens up the possibilities of what can be accomplished as community partners listen to each other and take action together to support literacy learning for people of all ages.

Community literacy plans promote community alignment of literacy initiatives. They make explicit the inter-relationships among community members and the links between formal and informal learning systems. They build on what has already been developed and identify the contributions of various partners.

Community literacy plans become district literacy plans and are submitted through boards of education. These represent the literacy work happening in communities within the geographic boundary of the school district. This submission is not meant to represent the board's approval of the plan or ultimate responsibility for the work. Instead, it is a demonstration of the board's commitment to understand learning outside of the work traditionally done by the K-12 system; the recognition of the value of literacy work taking place across the community; and the value of collaborating and sharing to build more successful learners and communities.

Literacy outreach coordinators facilitate the work of task groups across the province. As they provide support for literacy work throughout communities, they are focal points for knowledge about the task groups, literacy plans, actions and impacts. Part of their role is to provide their community's literacy plan for input into the district literacy plan for submission to the Ministry of Education as required.

For all participants, the yearly process of reviewing and updating the literacy plan allows community literacy work to grow stronger. It is the opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments, the strengths, and the challenges.

TIMELINE

March - May	Meetings of the task group/s and interested community members to review the goals and work of the current year and plan for the next year.
May - June	Literacy outreach coordinators write up the community literacy plan, consulting with members of the task groups as appropriate, and provide information to their local boards of education.
On or before July 15	District literacy plans are submitted.
On or before July 31	Literacy outreach coordinators fill out the online implementation report at Edudata. See Part Five: Accountability for further explanation about the online report.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

While community literacy plans are working documents for task groups, they also provide a snapshot in time about what is occurring in communities. They state the broad literacy goals for all age groups and describe how partners across the community are sharing resources and coming up with effective literacy services that are embedded in all aspects of life.

Individually, a community literacy plan provides a roadmap for a community as it considers past, present, and future work around its literacy goals. Collectively, literacy plans provide a provincial overview of literacy work that has benefitted or resulted from the collaborative work of community literacy task groups.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Even though the style and format of community literacy plans varies from place to place, meeting the needs of individual task groups, all of them address the guiding questions. Answering these questions will require task groups and service providers to sit down and have a deeper discussion, particularly about priorities, goals and objectives for the coming year.

Examples of other district/community literacy plans can be found on the ReadNow BC website at: readnowbc.ca/communities/district_literacy_plans.php

See the next section for information about ways to review and set priorities for the community/district literacy plan each year.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Reflections on the current year:

1) Task group:
   a. Who takes part in the task group?
   b. How is the work of this group organized? (See the following section "Reflecting and Renewing: Ways to review and set priorities for the community literacy plan each year" for information about how task groups are organized.)

2) Community context:
   a. What has happened in the community over the past year that impacts people in the community and the ability of organizations to support literacy development? Consider both positive and negative impacts.

3) Community development and literacy collaboration:
   a. What are the important collaborations that have taken place to support literacy and the work of the task group?
   b. What are the essential ongoing collaborations?
   c. What makes collaborations work well?

4) Goals and actions for the current year:
   a. What priorities, goals or objectives have you addressed this year?
   b. What actions were taken to reach these? What organizations and groups participated in these actions?
   c. What adjustments were made to the plan? That is, as the year progressed were there new opportunities or were there changes that did not allow for some actions to be taken?

5) Indications of success:
   a. How do you know that actions taken are working to support literacy? What impact have the literacy initiatives had? It is important to include examples to illustrate the impact.
   b. What are the things that support literacy work?

6) Challenges:
   a. What are the difficulties?
   b. What would help?

For the coming year:

1) Are there new opportunities, challenges or issues in your community? How will you respond to those?

2) What goals, priorities or objectives will you work on in the coming year? What actions are planned against those goals?

3) What will be required to meet the goals and effectively employ actions for the coming year?

Part Four
Reflecting and renewing

Reflecting and renewing: Ways to review and set priorities for the community literacy plan each year

Task groups approach the process of putting together community literacy plans in a variety of ways. Following are examples of approaches that task groups have used that can be tailored, mixed or matched to suit the needs of each community.

1. Ongoing notes and input online:

- The literacy outreach coordinator (LOC) writes up responses to the guiding questions based on notes, minutes of task group meetings, discussions and other documents that have been generated over the year.
- The LOC shares these notes with task group members who add their thoughts by email or in an electronic format like Google Docs at docs.google.com

2. Task group meetings throughout the year:

- The task group meets three times a year to discuss the guiding questions.
  a. The early fall meeting includes reviewing what has been accomplished, plans for the coming year, the budget, and what can be undertaken.
  b. The mid-year meeting provides a chance to touch base, see how plans are proceeding, and review what is needed and what other gaps exist to be addressed in the future.
  c. An early spring meeting provides the opportunity to "roll-up" the year and discuss what will be in the community literacy plan.
- A survey may also be used to check-in with a wider circle of community service

providers and identify their thoughts on literacy work in the community, what they are working on, what more they feel needs to be addressed and what they might contribute.

3. Subcommittees and a template:

- The task group uses its original community literacy plan as the template for its yearly community literacy plan update.
- The task group has subcommittees for parts of the community literacy plan, for example early/family literacy, youth literacy, adult literacy, workplace essential skills.
- Each of the subcommittees has its own work plan related to the community literacy plan and reviews its progress against the work plan.
- Updates are then made to the community literacy plan.

4. Meeting with the extended community:

- A wide range of community service providers, identified through task group members and the LOC, are invited to meet for an afternoon to hear a presentation on the progress the task group has made to date, the issues they have addressed over the year, and the work that might be undertaken in the future.
- Participants are invited to contribute to table discussions about what literacy needs they encounter in their work, what gaps they see in the community, what should be identified as priority work, what might be done to address these priorities, and what they could contribute.
- Input from tables is collected and prioritized by the wider group (with the use of sticky dots to identify the top priorities).
- The LOC adds this material to that from discussions that have taken place at task group meetings to address the guiding questions.

5. Other approaches:

Share your ideas about ways to complete the community literacy plan in the Community of Literacy Practice (www.literacycommunity.ca). The Community of Literacy Practice (CoLP) is a networking tool for literacy practitioners and supporters to share resources, questions, new ideas and information about literacy. Current users include community literacy task groups and local/regional literacy coordinators; adult literacy practitioners, early learning educators, school districts, and community service organization. If you are already a member of the CoLP, log in now. If you would like to become a member, or if you have any questions, please contact us at info@decoda.ca.

Part Five
Accountability

Accountability

The collaborative process and actions taken to support literacy plays a central role in accountability about community literacy work. The community literacy plan and responses to the Guiding Questions demonstrate that accountability.

Since 2006 data and information has been collected from community literacy plans and literacy implementation reports to measure activity and progress related to the community literacy planning process. From this data, an accountability framework has been developed by which we can understand and demonstrate our collective responsibility and effectiveness.

This framework gives us a way of organizing the data collected, both quantitative and qualitative, and gives us the opportunity to reflect on the needs of task groups, service providers, and, most importantly, learners.

Three general categories have emerged that can be used to identify progress toward the outcomes of our collective work in the community, in programs and in individual learning. These outcome categories are used in the accountability framework.

1. Readiness (Immediate Outcomes)

Readiness is the initial stage of getting prepared. It is a concept most commonly applied to early childhood where we think about being developmentally ready for specific kinds of learning, as well as being ready for school. We often talk about support to young children as the preparation or the readiness for a lifetime of successful learning.

Research has found that large numbers of adults who are most in need of expanding their learning seldom participate in adult education and training. Therefore, much of the initial work with learners in adult literacy programs is in the realm of helping them to prepare or get ready for learning related to life situations.

Applied to community development, the readiness stage includes community organizations getting to know each other, learning about the needs of community members, and thinking about how to best meet the needs of people in the community.

2. Engagement (Intermediate Outcomes)

Learners are engaged when they are involved in their work, persist despite challenges and obstacles, and find satisfaction in accomplishing their work. Research tells us that engaged learners are self-regulated, and are able to define their own learning goals and evaluate their own achievement. Engaged learning also involves being collaborative, that is, valuing and having the skills to work with others.

As communities become more engaged in thinking about literacy, they find ways to work together to support programs and to embed learning in activities across the community. There is a broader understanding about literacy in communities and increased participation in literacy initiatives. Services become more effective and more sustainable.

3. Learning (Long-Term Outcomes)

For individuals, this outcome category is about the successful acquisition and application of new ideas and skills essential for living in and adapting to the society in which we find ourselves.

At the community level, literacy is embedded in strategic plans, lifelong learning is part of the culture and there are established, sustainable practices of organizations working together.

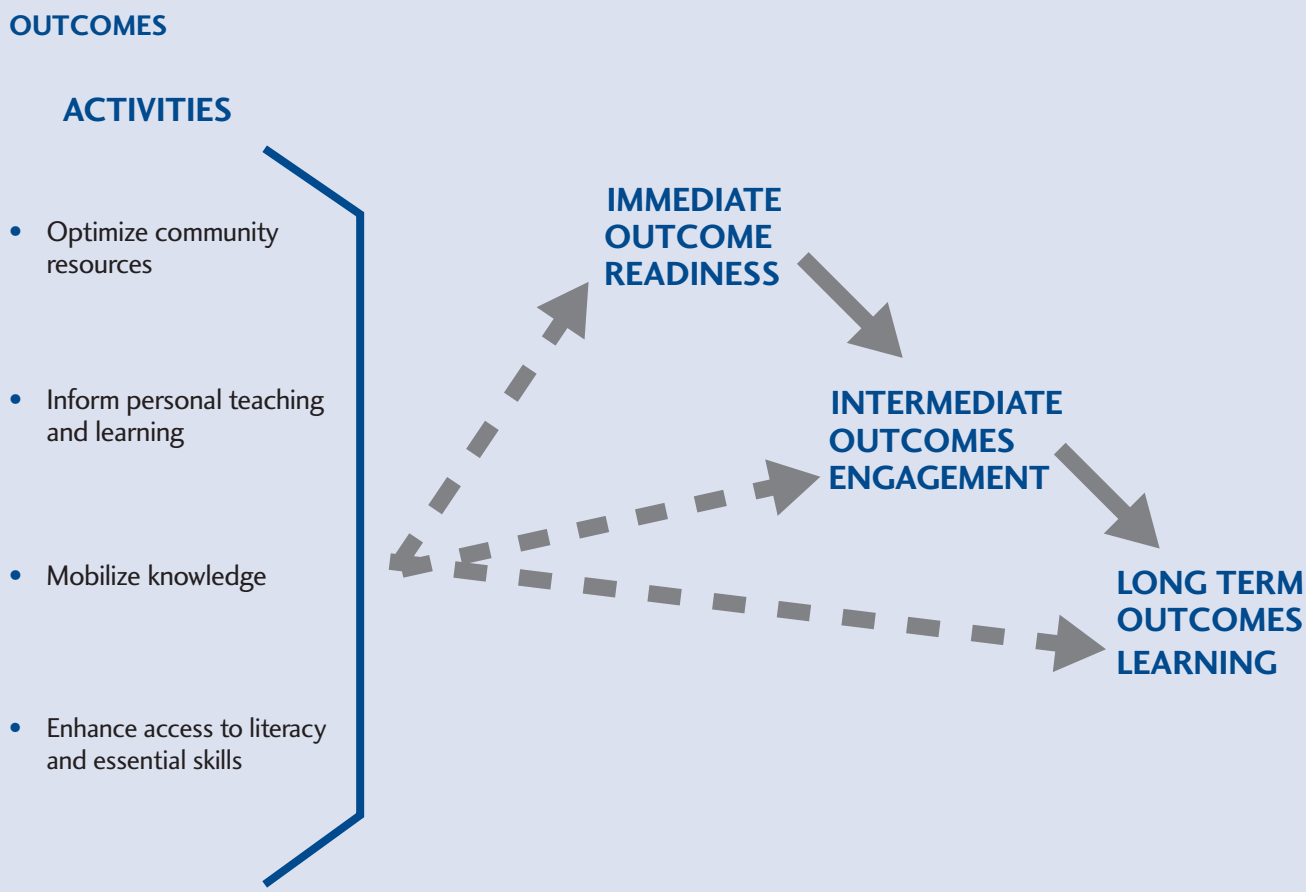
In addition to seeing patterns of readiness, engagement and learning in the literacy work that is taking place across the province, there is also a pattern related to the types of work that are being undertaken. Four lines of activity have been identified for the accountability framework:

- Optimizing community resources: developing and sustaining partnerships, networks and initiatives; return on community investment;
- Informing personal teaching and learning: tools, assessments, supports and good practices for practitioners;
- Mobilizing knowledge: demonstrating and sharing achievements and lessons learned; and
- Enhancing access to literacy and essential skills: providing initiatives that increase individual skills.

Community literacy plans and online implementation reports are two sources of information about the progress towards the accountability framework outcomes. Other tools for gathering information about the outcomes in the provincial accountability framework includes focus groups, case studies, surveys and the collection of stories about community and individual successes.

Decoda Literacy Solutions organizes the information that literacy outreach coordinators provide with the above outcome categories and lines of activity in mind. As we all explore the questions of what is going well, what is missing, and how we can work collaboratively to fill the literacy gaps, we can use this information to guide our individual and collective paths.

THE ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK



THE ONLINE IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

On behalf of community literacy task groups, literacy outreach coordinators fill out an online implementation report housed with Edudata at the University of British Columbia. This online report collects data against the accountability framework's outcome categories and helps to code the diverse goals and accomplishments of communities against the outcomes of the provincial framework. For more information on this report, contact Decoda Literacy Solutions at info@decoda.ca

The data from the online report can help as we look at trends and patterns over time and can be collated provincially, by school district, by electoral district and by college region.

Table 1 below provides a sample of how the data collected shows the progress towards outcomes in 2009/10 and compared to data collected in 2006 (in parentheses).

Table 1: Sample data collected in the online implementation report

OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	2009/10 (2006)
Readiness: Community members have a shared understanding of literacy and learning issues and needs	Number of task groups and coordinators	102 (19)
	Number of community organizations on task groups and subcommittees about literacy	1,040 (183)
	Number of committees attended by LOCs	624 (175)
Engagement: Community members work together to support lifelong and lifewide literacy learning	Number of organizations collaborating to deliver literacy initiatives	859 (118)
	Reported amount of funding provided by communities through grants, fundraising, partner contributions and in-kind support	3,083,371 (435,702)
Readiness: Individuals and agencies in communities are aware of opportunities for learning in the community	Number of participants in events	36,237 (8,013)
	Books and other literacy materials distributed	57,114 (13,064)
Engagement: Community members participate in learning and literacy	Number of new and continuing programs	780 (178)
	Number of participants in programs (adults and children)	19,172 (8,473)

Because each community has distinct goals and objectives, not all of the questions in the database apply to every community. The database is simply one approach to telling the story of literacy work that benefits or results from the collaborative, coordinated approach of community literacy task groups.

In order to collect data consistently, LOCs fill out the database report on or before July 31 of each year. This aligns data collection with the community/district literacy plan submission, on or before July 15 of each year.

That's gotta hurt.
Save your fingers. Use the guards.

Part Six
The Process

The Process: Strengthening Our Communities

The community literacy plan is the yearly work plan and documentation of the goals and actions resulting from the process of community-wide discussions about literacy support for people of all ages.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY?

A community is "a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographic locations or settings." (Canadian Institute for Health Information, ed., Mentally Healthy Communities: A Collection of Papers (Ottawa, Ont, 2008).

Put much more simply, the Zulu people share the philosophy of "Ubuntu" which states that "I am what I am because of who we all are."

OVER TIME, SELF-SUSTAINING, LITERATE, NUMERATE AND TECHNOLOGICALLY COMPETENT COMMUNITIES WILL DEVELOP. WHAT WOULD THIS LOOK LIKE?

Children, young people and adults see themselves as able to read, write and communicate in a range of ways.

Parents are confident in their own abilities to develop literacy, numeracy and communication skills in their children.

Students leaving school have reached levels in literacy and numeracy, and gained communication skills that enable them to achieve their long-term goals.

Adults have adequate literacy, numeracy and communication skills to fully participate in community, social and economic activities.

There is a strong culture of individuals, families and organizations promoting and investing in developing literacy, numeracy and communication skills.

Learning is at the heart of community capacity building and development.

Informal learning at home, at work and in the community is recognized, encouraged and linked to formal learning systems.

Businesses provide basic skills opportunities and work-related training.

Lifelong learning is a core value for everyone. [1]

[1] Building a Literacy Friendly Community, Gadsby and Perryman, 2003

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The process behind the community literacy plan is based in the theory of community development. Community development seeks to strengthen individuals and groups of people by providing the resources and skills that people need to affect change in their own communities. Community development is happening when people come together to share their knowledge and ideas with others; develop relationships of mutual trust, understanding and belonging; and feel they are part of "something bigger".

In her literacy work with First Nations adults, Carmen Rodriguez (1994) identifies several promising practices for community development including:

- Involving participants in key decisions;
- Responding to community needs as part of a larger vision or plan;
- Using community resources;
- Valuing learning;
- Incorporating the cultures and languages of learners; and
- Collaborating with other community groups when setting up new projects and applying for new funding.

COMMUNITY LITERACY TASK GROUPS: GETTING THE WORK DONE

> *"Literacy is a key lever of change and a practical tool of empowerment on each of the three main pillars of sustainable development: economic development, social development and environmental protection."*
>
> — Kofi Anan, then Secretary General of the United Nations, September 9, 2005

Literacy is "joined up" to many aspects of the lives of individuals and communities. In fact, literacy is connected to health, having enough to eat, employment, family well-being, further education, and justice. To support literacy effectively we need to place it in the context of community and connect it with real life issues and events. To act on these "joined up" issues we need to join up community agencies, organizations, and institutions that focus on these various issues, providing a place and opportunity to pool resources as well as to experience and view things through a literacy lens.

Task groups are made up of interested individuals from various sectors, including early childhood education, the K-12 system, post-secondary institutions, libraries, businesses, the health sector, local government, First Nations

communities, immigrant communities, community service organizations, and other task groups. The recognition of the importance of literacy as a community building tool and a strategy for supporting economic, social, health and educational goals sustains the interest of task group members.

The size of the community literacy task group often changes from year to year. Frequently, this group expands as more people see the potential of addressing literacy as more than just reading and writing. But task groups can also shrink in numbers as priorities are fine-tuned. Many task groups choose to keep in touch with a broader number of supporters via email, newsletters, and occasional larger meetings and celebrations. Keeping in touch brings to light opportunities to collaborate, often in surprising places and ways. As we become more creative and sophisticated about "joining up" community solutions, we can see new opportunities and try more approaches.

Some communities use already established committees such as interagency committees as the community literacy task group. This is particularly helpful when everyone who would participate in a group to talk about literacy is already meeting.

Some task groups have designated committees to do the thinking about specific goals from the community literacy plan. For example, one Metro Vancouver task group has a subcommittee for each of adult literacy, family literacy, ESL, essential skills, and health literacy. These committees may be ad hoc and only meet until the objectives for which they are set up are achieved, or they may be standing committees. Making opportunities for these subcommittees to come together as part of the whole task group to share ideas and work is important as many literacy learning opportunities are intergenerational and intercultural in nature.

HOW DO WE SPEND OUR MONEY? VS. HOW CAN WE SOLVE THIS PROBLEM?

A great deal of thought and discussion takes place about the allocation of funds that are provided to take action on the community literacy plan. Literacy task groups are asked to approach the allocation of funds by using their community literacy plan as a guide, by asking what needs exist in the community and how those needs might be addressed. In other words, it's not "how much do we have to spend and where should we spend it?" but instead "what are our needs and how do we prioritize them?"

Rather than ask community organizations to compete with each other by submitting applications for specific programs for a finite amount of funding, funding decisions should simply be an extension of discussions that take place at the task group table about how to address specific issues.

In other words, the task group is not a granting committee, but a group of informed and engaged representatives who can think about and initiate actions that will support literacy and learning. Task group members bring together resources, experience, and support in collaboration with others at the table to address community issues in a way that might not be possible if they were working alone. Any program funding that the task group has is used as additional support to make it all happen.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

COMMUNITY LITERACY TASK GROUP

Task group members bring experience and support from their lives and from the organizations that they represent. To take full advantage of this, the focus of the task group should be on strategic thinking about community and literacy rather than on the day-to-day management of how to carry out the plan's actions; that is the work of the literacy outreach coordinator with the support of the steward organization.

Task group members are continually addressing questions such as:

- Where are the literacy gaps and opportunities in our community?
- What can we contribute to a possible solution?
- What is the best thing that we can do for people in our community?

Essentially the work of the task group is about solving problems in the community - figuring out what the problems are, thinking about how they can be addressed, and talking and working together to identify solutions.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY LITERACY TASK GROUPS:

Relationships and collaboration: Communities build and support networks, partnerships and mentoring relationships.

Innovation: Communities value new ways of viewing existing programs, new partnerships and new ideas for programs.

Respect: People are treated with respect and will be encouraged to freely share their ideas. Diversity is welcomed and valued.

Capacity building: Programs and projects promote and sustain lifelong learning for all participants and focus on improving the life chances of children and adults. People feel empowered to act.

Access for all: All community members have the opportunity to be part of the planning process and the programs.

Strength building: Communities respect, build on and enhance past and current practices.

Sustainability: Success grows from long - term, sustained commitment to literacy learning.

Joy: People are involved in friendly and enthusiastic ways, celebrating success from time to time.

From the Community Literacy Planning Guide

THE STEWARD

As the task group is not a legal entity, it decides on a steward organization that can receive and manage funds and formally hire the literacy outreach coordinator. The steward organization is a member of the task group and participates in the thinking about how to best support literacy development. As well, the steward may be one of the agencies that delivers literacy programs and services.

Typically, stewards are local literacy organizations or other community service providers. In some cases, they are libraries, schools, school districts, or post secondary institutions. Sometimes the steward has a current employee who can also act as the literacy outreach coordinator and sometimes the LOC is contracted or employed through the steward organization. In many cases the steward agency takes a percentage of the funds to cover administrative costs while this may seem unnecessary or a diversion of scarce resources, the ability to support community service agencies is a very important part of having those services available and contributes to building capacity.

LITERACY OUTREACH COORDINATORS

Community literacy task groups have identified the need for a paid coordinating person, and as a result, literacy outreach coordinators are now in place across the province. This position has become critical to the ability of communities to carry out actions that support literacy based on the planning process and to facilitate discussions around collaborations.

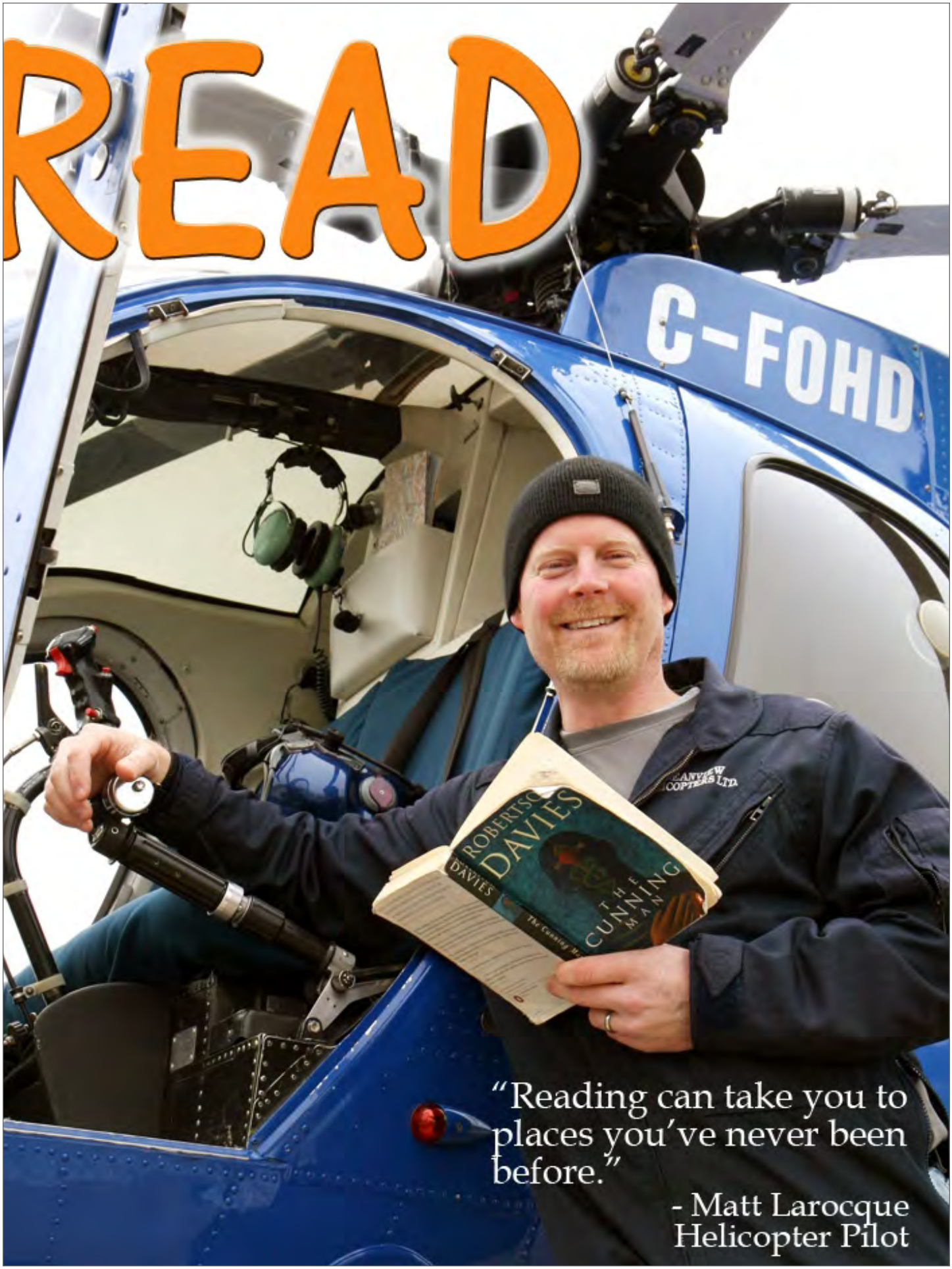
The job description of the literacy outreach coordinator varies depending on the community assets already in place and the nature of the literacy plan.

However, activities commonly include:

- Providing facilitation and support to the community literacy task group to set strategic direction, including reviewing and updating the community literacy plan and providing data for the online database as described in Part Five: Accountability;
- Supporting community groups engaged in the provision of literacy programs and services;
- Working with groups and individuals to facilitate the creation of new or enhanced literacy programs and services in keeping with the goals of the community literacy plan;
- Encouraging broad community representation, participation and leadership for literacy;
- Assisting service providers and community members to create collaborative and integrated services;
- Identifying and establishing supportive relationships and networks for literacy work;
- Participating in various community planning and advisory meetings, bringing an understanding about the relationship of literacy to various community concerns;
- Participating in evaluation and measurement strategies for literacy work;
- Acting as a liaison at the provincial and community levels to ensure that literacy initiatives align with broader national, provincial, regional and community directions;
- Identifying sources of funding and participating in the application of funds as appropriate.

The work of the literacy outreach coordinator (LOC) requires:

- Excellent communication skills, written and oral;
- Strong facilitation and interpersonal abilities;
- A high degree of self-initiative to maintain progress and momentum in the community;
- An understanding of the importance of being inclusive, sensitive and respectful in approaches to collaboration in the midst of diversity;
- Accommodation of community uniqueness, different points of view and cross-cultural contexts.


READ
C-FOHD
ROBERTSON DAVIES
THE CUNNING MAN
"Reading can take you to places you've never been before."
- Matt Larocque
Helicopter Pilot

Part Seven
Collaboration

Collaboration

Community literacy plans are more than just an annual document – they are a statement about how individuals and organizations are engaged in collaboration to support the development of literacy strategies.

Collaboration has been defined as "a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible" (Westley and Vredenburg,1989).

Broad - based discussions about literacy help people in communities to:

- Understand the broad social, historical, and community context of literacy and learning;
- Link the formal, non-formal and informal learning that is happening in communities;
- Increase partnerships and cooperation to take action;
- Expand on and develop new ways to support the development of literacy skills in individuals; and
- Develop a strong base of evidence to inform policy and promote good practice.

But collaborations can also come with challenges. Because organizations and institutions come with their own ways of thinking about literacy and supporting learners, working together successfully takes time and thought. Strengthening and building relationships is integral to the planning process. Cultivating strong relationships enables all of us to appreciate the power of working together.

Collaborative action is built by:

- Learning how community groups are already inter-related and how they currently work together;
- Listening carefully to what everyone says regarding the potential of working together and how people in the community can benefit from that; and
- Participating in the work arising from discussions at the community table about how everyone's knowledge and understanding about issues and ideas can be brought together in a way that can make a difference.

Collaborating requires knowledge of consensus building. In order to collaborate and build consensus, participants will need:

- A willingness to listen to all points of view;
- Respect for diversity and the richness that it brings to community work;
- An appreciation of minority viewpoints and of the importance of including people and groups who are the hardest to reach ;
- An understanding of community;
- A commitment to the integrity of the process;
- An ability to step back and trust the group;
- A commitment to maintaining the unity of the group; and
- A willingness to commit to the beliefs and values of a collaborative process.

Part Eight
Creative Solutions to Community Challenges

Young Parents

At least two task groups have narrowed the goal about assisting vulnerable youth to an objective about supporting young families in which parents have not completed high school.

THE TASK GROUPS CONSIDERED QUESTIONS SUCH AS THE FOLLOWING:

- What organizations would have an interest in this discussion? Are they at the table?
- What are the possible reasons for the high rate of teen pregnancy in our community?
- Most of the young parents or about-to-be parents we know are female. Where are the fathers? How are they affected? Are the fathers involved with the babies?
- Are there pregnant teens who are still attending school? What are the issues for them? What happens when the babies are born? Do the babies come with them to school or are they cared for by grandparents? How long do the young women attend school following the birth of their babies? Do the fathers continue to attend school?
- Are young parents attending prenatal and/or parenting classes?
- How are young families supporting themselves?
- Are there any learning programs specifically for young parents or pregnant teens currently in the community? How are they doing? What more is needed?
- What are the best ways that the community could collectively support these young families?

After some discussion, the Cranbrook task group received information directly from young parents through a small focus group session led by the literacy outreach coordinator and the trusted facilitator of a parenting program. The mostly young women in the focus group were clear that any of their dreams for a better future were precluded by a need to finish high school. In order to do that they would need to have lots of one-to-one assistance with course work – some said that they would need to start with some very basic skills, particularly in math. They wanted to have their young children, often babies, with them or very nearby, they needed to be able to make lunch, they needed a counsellor, and they needed transportation assistance.

Members of the task group examined possibilities and, in the end, The Young Parents Education Program was set up in some free day space at the Boys and Girls Club which could also provide child minding. The college provided an instructor, the community literacy organization hired a program coordinator who was also a counsellor, lunch materials were often donated, and transportation was arranged for participants who needed it. In a subsequent iteration of this program, the college is providing space and the school district is providing some support with supplies.

For more information about this program, contact Katherine Hough at khough@cbal.org

The Gathering Place - Campbell River

In 2008, community service providers in Campbell River received Early Years Development Indicator (EDI) results that showed that one Campbell River neighbourhood had changed dramatically. EDI vulnerability rates had jumped from approximately 11% vulnerable in 2004/05 up to 38% vulnerable in 2006/07.

After some consultation, task group members realized that increased housing prices had pushed families with lower incomes into one neighbourhood and separated them from services and resources designed to support them. In response the task group asked BC Housing to provide them with a minimal $10/year lease and $40, 000 for renovations to restore a defunct child care centre in one of the neighbourhood's low income housing projects.

Multiple services and agencies (Laichwiltach, Campbell River Family Services, Parks and Recreation, FASD Key Worker, Vancouver Island Health Authority and many others) offered to provide programming in the renovated centre and to create a Family Support Centre. The Centre now includes an Aboriginal preschool program, youth programs, an after school program, demonstration kitchens, Strong Start BC, Family Place, super-Saturday activities for children and a dad's group. It is always full of people.

The Gathering Place Family Resource Centre is funded by Success By 6, School District 72, and Campbell River Literacy Now.

For more information, contact Anne Boyd at anne.crliteracynow@gmail.com or (250)-923-6821

Ground to Griddle Community Kitchen - Smithers

In their original community literacy plan completed in 2006, members of the Smithers task group identified the need to create and manage a centralized community learning place. In addition, existing adult literacy programs struggled with learner recruitment and retention, and coordinators identified food security as a major reason for lack of participation. The community learning place concept took shape in 2009 when a community kitchen was created to meet the food security needs of potential adult learners.

Closely connected with the Princess Street Neighbourhood Garden, the community kitchen was named the Ground to Griddle Neighbourhood Kitchen by participants. The kitchen has been able to provide people with help to meet some of their basic food needs, as well as literacy skill development in the form of reading recipes, cooking skills, healthy eating, food safe, basic math, budgeting, organization and planning.

Over time, the program expanded to offer modified English curriculum in collaboration with Northwest Community College.

In addition, programs such as Writing Out Loud, Aboriginal Literacy Theme Units, the Calendar Project, and the Cultivating Wisdom project (for seniors and elders to share their knowledge with younger members of the community) have been offered.

As participant numbers in the kitchen continue to grow, so do the requests for one-on-one tutoring and information about other learning opportunities in the community. A volunteer program has begun to create a team of community kitchen leaders who will be trained in literacy awareness and mentoring. These kitchen volunteers currently focus on building relationships with participants in the kitchen and, therefore, will transition more easily to the role of one-on-one tutor.

The Ground2Griddle blog (ground2griddle.blogspot.com/) is written by participants and documents their culinary adventures, including holiday baking, caribou and moose hide medicine bags, sauerkraut, and wild berries.

"Our community, like many others, is interested in bringing food back into the hands of the people who eat and grow it! We do not want to be dependent on large supermarket chains that carry produce from all over the world but very little from the fertile valleys of our own province." Excerpt from the blog

For more information about this initiative, contact Elke Heinemann-Pesch at literacy@scsa.ca.

Seniors and Literacy - Renfrew Collingwood Neighbourhood

In the third year of implementing the community literacy plan in the Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood of Vancouver, the task group wanted to focus on connecting residents of the neighbourhood with service providers. As they were doing this work, they discovered Collingwood Towers, a residential building for seniors. Staff from the Neighbourhood House discovered that people living there did not know each other and were quite isolated, in part because they come from many different places and do not speak the same language.

Neighbourhood House staff have a model of offering informal, volunteer facilitated English conversation classes to seniors who want to learn English as a second language. Collaborating with the Cultural Connecters program (community members trained to engage other culturally isolated community members), they offered conversation-based classes to seniors at Collingwood Towers once a week for an hour and a half. More than 10 people participate each time, and the total number of those who have participated in this series of activities is over 30. Four volunteer facilitators and one senior on site have been involved in guiding the activities.

For more information contact Wenhuan Ren (Wen) at wenhuanr@hotmail.com

Supporting School Aged Children - Powell River

The task group in Powell River (The Powell River Literacy Council) created a campaign to promote reading throughout the community. This campaign has a couple of components. From May 2010 through February 2011, a Heroes Read poster was created every month that featured a community member saying something about why reading is important to them. For example, CaroleAnn Leishman, an Architectural Designer and the Director of Showgirlz & Musical Theatre, was the reading hero for October. Each reading hero made a visit to one of the local schools to do something special with the children. Here is the description of CaroleAnn's visit from the Powell River Literacy Council website:

> CaroleAnn visited Assumption School to read to the Grade 2 class and talk to them about how reading is important in her work and life. As a special treat she brought a book that was written by a 9-year-old girl to show them. "If there's something you want to do in life, and you want to do it really badly, don't ever let anyone tell you you can't do it - just do it!" CaroleAnn's hour at Assumption was full of fun and laughter. After the story, the students got to try their hands at designing the inside floor plan of a house, with CaroleAnn's help. "Reading allows you to perform many roles in life," CaroleAnn says - and she is a perfect example of that!
>
> See powellriverliteracy.ca

As an extension of Heroes Read, the literacy council partnered with the Kings Hockey Association and First Insurance on the READ Program, a reading incentive program for all school-aged children from Kindergarten to Grade 7. Each week from October through mid- February, hockey players visited schools in the community to read with the students and play hockey. Each week they announced a reading hero from one of the classes - someone who had been trying really hard with his or her reading. Students in all grades had two chances to win, and the names of the reading heroes from all the schools were put in a draw for a grand prize helicopter ride at the end of the program; the winner was also featured on the last Heroes Read Poster. The winners were announced, and the last poster unveiled, at a First Insurance-sponsored Kings Hockey Game in February 2011 that featured the READ program and was dedicated to literacy.

For more information contact Emma Levez Larocque at literacypr@prepsociety.org.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT
SEC
BUDGET
EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

Part Nine
Building a culture of learning

Building a culture of learning

In 1965, at a world congress of ministers of education, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted the view that 'rather than an end in itself, literacy should be regarded as a way of preparing man for a social, civic and economic role that goes far beyond the limits of rudimentary literacy training consisting merely in the teaching of reading and writing'.

The most commonly accepted definition of literacy is this one from UNESCO:

> "Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning to enable an individual to achieve his or her goals, to develop his or her knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in the wider society."

This definition and its emphasis on literacy as the ability to participate captures the relationship between human capital (the knowledge, skill competencies, and attributes that allow people to contribute) and social capital (the ability to have relationships, reciprocity and cooperation).
Acquiring and developing literacy skills are a part of everyday living – at home, school, work, and in the community. We come to new learning opportunities by a variety of routes, including our interest in local politics, our faith, our culture, our work and helping our children learn. Understanding this reality must be part of any approach to addressing literacy.

Literacy development does not happen in isolation. We know that the best way to learn, and to be encouraged to learn, is to be engaged in things we care about with people we care about. Many researchers (Kilpatrick, Field and Falk, 2003; Keeley, 2007) have proposed that we need to acknowledge, understand and focus on developing social capital, defined as a resource based on relationships among people.

Learning that is outside of formal education curricula is referred to as non-formal and is characterized as organized, intentional, voluntary, and usually short-term. Examples of non-formal learning include community based courses on food preparation or quilting. Informal learning is self-directed, incidental and often unintentional. Examples include searches on the internet, chats at the water cooler or baking cookies with one's children.

Why are non-formal and informal learning important? They can:

- Bring people and communities together;
- Unite the generations;
- Build confidence;
- Increase personal fulfillment; and
- Provide the stepping stones to further and formal learning

They can be viewed through the lenses of:
Learning to know: becoming inspired, discovering and exploring a passion for learning, acquiring knowledge and understanding of ourselves, our immediate world and beyond.

Learning to do: gaining skills, confidence, competence and practical abilities.

Learning to live together: learning tolerance, mutual understanding and interdependence, sharing the experience of learning with family and friends.

Learning to be: developing ourselves, our mental and physical capacity, wellbeing and autonomy, and our ability to take control of our lives and influence the world around us.

Human capital, social capital, formal, non-formal and informal learning are all aspects of a culture of learning – something that we can create with intention and collaboration.

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Notes

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